

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 are currently pending, wherein claims 1 and 4 have been amended to include the subject matter of canceled claims 3 and 6, respectively. Applicants respectfully request entry of the above-identified amendment and favorable reconsideration in view of the remarks presented herein below.

At the outset, Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 3 and 6 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Applicants hereby propose to amend independent claims 1 and 4 to include the subject matter of canceled claims 3 and 6, respectively.

In paragraph 2 of the Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,113,392 to Takiyasu et al. ("Takiyasu") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,161,189 to Bray et al. ("Bray"). Independent claims 1 and 4 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claims 3 and 6, thereby rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The application is in condition for allowance. Notice of same is earnestly solicited. Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Penny Caudle (Reg. No. 46,607) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Application No. 09/898,024
Amendment dated November 22, 2006
After Final Office Action of July 25, 2006

Docket No.: 0054-0236P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: November 22, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By Penny Caudle *Penny Caudle*
D. Richard Anderson
Registration No.: 40,439
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicants